

Street names are part of history

From the writings of the late historian and columnist Jack Rudolph — Part I of a two-part series:

Ever wonder how the street you live on got its name?

In Green Bay, as in every other city, some street names are obvious; others have their origins of the city and carry undertones of old rivalries, conflicts or friendships. In some cases nobody remembers where they came from.

On Green Bay's east side, street names go back to the rival villages of Astor and Navarino. In 1830 when Daniel Whitney platted the village of Navarino, nucleus of the present city, he laid out a grid of 12 streets each way. A few of them went north to the East River. At that time it was known as Devil River.

The southern boundary was south of Walnut Street, running east and west through the present courthouse and between Jefferson Court and the WBAY building.

He labeled his north-south streets beginning with Washington, after presidents of the United States. There had only been seven presidents up to that time so those east of Jackson were simply numbered 8th through 12th streets.

His east-west streets were named after trees, beginning with Walnut on the south and continuing north to Elm.



Throughout this year of Wisconsin's Sesquicentennial celebration, the Press-Gazette will publish a series of stories on local history. This feature, prepared with the assistance of the Brown County Historical Society, will appear on Mondays.



In 1835 James Doty, Ramsey Crooks, Robert Stuart and John Jacob Astor having failed to drive Whitney out of the fur trade, decided to cash in on property once owned by Green Bay's French fur traders which the American Fur Co. had obtained by

mortgage foreclosures. The village of Astor was platted immediately south of Navarino.

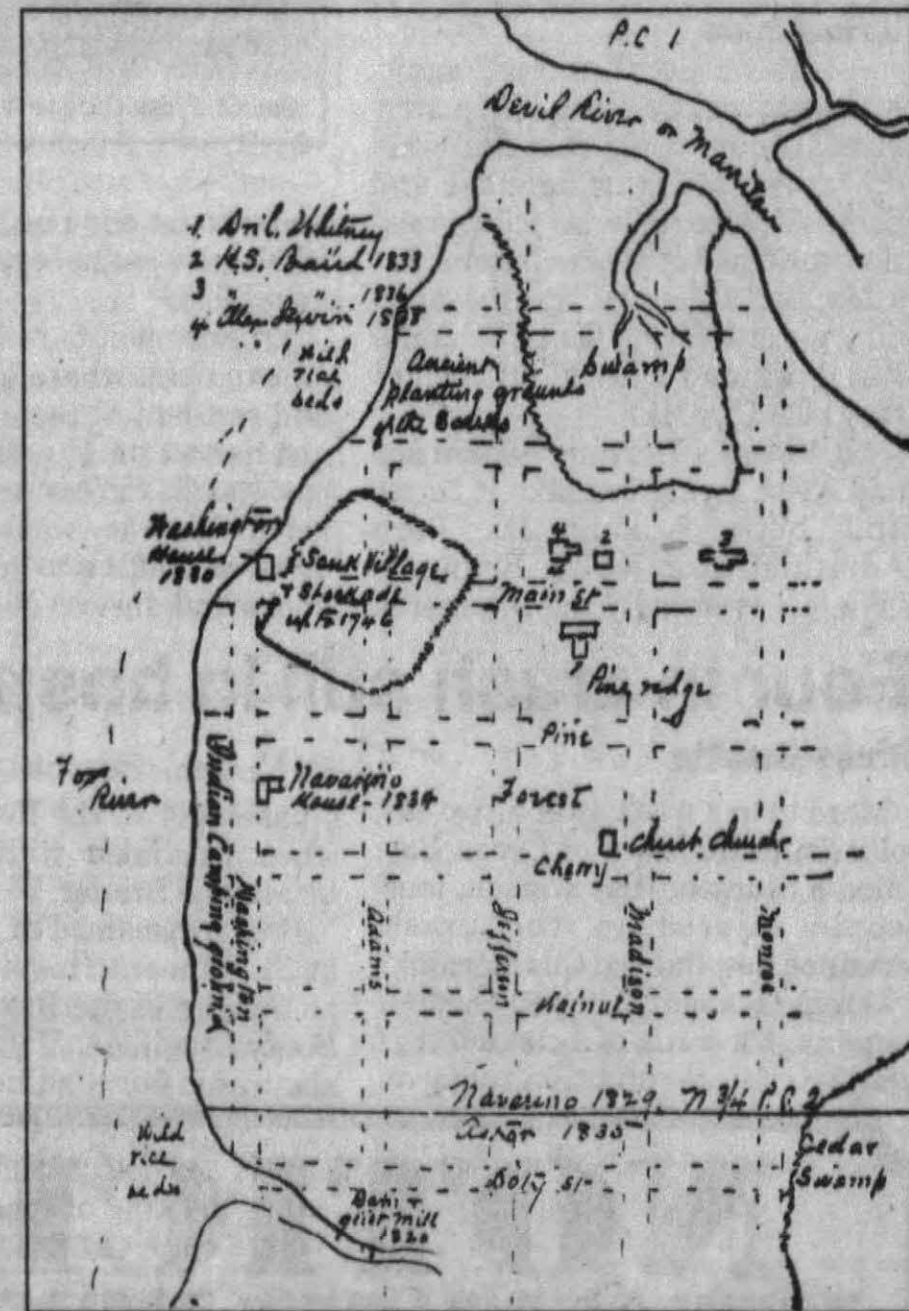
Doty laid out the new village with deliberate intention of provoking Whitney into a fight. He started extending Navarino's presidential series adding Van Buren, who was a cinch to succeed Jackson as president in 1836. He named the first street south of the boundary for himself. Next he honored his employers, Stuart and Crooks, as well as his political allies, Stephen Mason, Michigan territorial governor and Secretary of War, Lewis Cass.

Chicago was so named because it was to be part of a military road Doty was planning from Green Bay to Chicago. Emilie and Eliza were named for the wives of Crooks and Stuart. Doty then made a gesture towards former traders with Lawe, Porlier and Grignon streets.

Astor didn't rate a street because the village itself was named after him. He was, however, named for Astor Place which was planned by Doty as the business center of the new town, which later became Astor Park.

While Whitney reserved what is now known as Whitney Park as a public square, Doty set aside five

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Courtesy of Neville Public Museum

1830 map: This sketch map of Daniel Whitney shows Navarino just before the village combined with John Jacob Astor's namesake village to the south. The Navarino House (left center below the Sauk stockade) was later the site of Kaap's restaurant.

■ STREET

From B-4

such blocks named Jackson Square, Astor, Baird, St. James and St. John's Parks.

The area east of Monroe was covered by a dense swamp and was not opened until 1866, the only east-west streets to be cut through being Main and Mason. Main Street was opened all the way to the East River, while Mason was extended to what is now Baird Park. At that time it was the town cemetery.

After the two East Side villages consolidated into Green Bay in 1839 and Van Buren's name was added to the presidential roster, local followers of Daniel Webster and Henry Clay demanded streets for their heroes. Both men were viewed as good candidates for presidency but when they didn't make it, the continuity was broken and never restored.

In 1876 Monroe and Webster were changed from streets to avenues. At that time there was some interest in renaming Main Street for Whitney but nothing came of it.

The 1895 consolidation with Fort Howard required renaming 11th and 12 streets to avoid duplication. The first was eventually named in honor of Theodore Roosevelt and the latter for an early local resident, Robert Irwin.

Later other streets were added and named for Henry S. Baird, first lawyer in Brown County and John Suydam, early educator and newspaper editor. Many streets were named after mayors such as Kimball, Goodell, Klaus, Neville, Harung, Elmore, Desnoyers, and Abrams.

*Submitted by Carol Jones,
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Competing groups complicated street planning

From the writings of the late historian and columnist Jack Rudolph - Second of a two-part series:

The original layout of Fort Howard on the west side of the Fox River had no coordinated plan for naming its streets. The problem was further complicated by numerous name changes through the years, particularly at the time of the 1895 consolidation with Green Bay.

The west side's development might be considered as a series of small villages, each a separate real estate development, planned by competing groups or individuals who fought rather than cooperated with each other.

Because rival operators tried to block each other, streets often are not continuous. There are numerous gaps that have no apparent reason and little streets run all over the place. Even the familiar jog in the street between West Walnut and Shawano Avenue was the result of a fight.

The original plat of Fort Howard was made in 1850 by Joel S. Fisk, John Wallace Arndt, and Francis B. Desnoyers. The village ran from a line just south of Howard Street to just south of Hubbard and was divided by a cross thoroughfare called Main Street. North-south streets were named Water, Pearl, Broadway, Chestnut, Cherry, Cedar and Willow. There appears to have been no significance to the titles. No one knows how Pearl Street got its name. Hubbard was named for the Hubbard family, among the earliest residents.

Later, Fisk and Desnoyers projected an addition west to Oakland on both sides of Shawano, then known simply as the Wolf River road. The road was to be a continuation of Main Street, but either because of faulty surveying or confusion over the lines of some of the old French claims, the line was off center. The promoters got into a wrangle and because neither would compromise,



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the existing jog was the only way the streets could be joined.

Fort Howard's next big expansion was the Tank Addition by Caroline Tank in 1863. Tank had adopted a completely independent system, numbering all her streets and calling those running east-west, streets, and the north-south avenues. Some were renamed Clinton, Clark, Howe, Elm, and Oneida. The originally numbered avenues eventually became extensions of Broadway, Chestnut, Maple, Ashland and Oakland.

Fort Howard was blocked off from expansion by the Fort Howard Military Reservation. The street just south of the boundary was therefore called Divi-



Photo courtesy of Brown County Historical Society

On Broadway: The Howard House on the southeast corner of Broadway and Dousman Street has been the site of several modern-day restaurants.

sion Street. When this land was opened for settlement, Andrew Elmore gained control of it and platted his addition in his own way, honoring members of his family and close friends, some of whom never saw Green Bay. Dousman was named for his business partner, Talbot Dousman, while Bond and Mather honored old friends from Mukwanago rather than local figures.

Elmore named streets after his own children; James, Phebe, Augusta and Mary. Phebe is the correct spelling for that street.

Alexander and McDonald streets remember Alexander and Hugh McDonald, proprietors of a mill at their intersection near the river. Gray street was named after Oscar Gray, Fort Howard's first postmaster. Liberty Street commemorates the victory of World War I.

Streets in the Oak Circle subdivision

are named for former mayors; Thomas, Marshall, Neville, Abrams, Desnoyers, Minahan. Wilson was named for William Wilson, proprietor of a dairy farm on the property that became Oak Circle.

Such streets as Howard, Christiana, Caroline, Cora, Camm Place, Reed honor once prominent citizens and their families. Howard commemorates the army officer for whom Fort Howard was named. Christiana was the wife of Sylvester Hartman. Caroline was the wife of Sebastian Landwehr. Cora was C.W. Lomas's daughter. Camm Place was named for Thomas M. Camm, first American child born within the stockade of old Fort Howard. William Reed was a former city engineer.

Submitted by: Carol Jones, Brown County Historical Society.